

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sanford Bishop yesterday backed an Emergency Appropriations bill that includes funding for an extension of unemployment benefits and a landmark expansion of the GI Bill of Rights. The bipartisan legislation was backed by Democrats, Republicans and the White House and was approved by a vote of 416-12.

“Our men and women in uniform are bright, dedicated, and hard working individuals who deserve every chance at receiving an education when they leave the military. I am so proud to have supported legislation that, at last, gives them that opportunity,” said Congressman Bishop.

More than 43,973 men and women from Georgia have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, current benefits pay only about 70 percent of a public college education and 30 percent of a private college education for these veterans when they return home. The expanded GI Bill will restore full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help make them part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II. The legislation will also allow veterans to transfer those benefits to family members.

The Supplemental Appropriations bill also includes provisions to provide a 13 week extension of unemployment benefits for those workers who are unable to find a job in today’s struggling economy. The economy has lost nearly 325,000 jobs this year and 1.6 million Americans have been unemployed more than six months, despite looking for work.

“Ensuring unemployed Americans can make ends meet in a sagging economy is just common sense,” added Bishop.

The legislation approved by the House today also includes \$161.8 billion that will support the cost of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through the summer of 2009.